

C Marbut, Curtis Fletcher (1863-1935), Papers, 1852-1963
3720 4.4 linear feet

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INTRODUCTION

The personal and professional papers of C. F. Marbut, a geology professor at the University of Missouri, 1895-1910, and soil scientist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1910-1935, includes correspondence, estate and financial records, photographs, publications, manuscripts, and maps. The personal correspondence received by Louise Marbut Moomaw and a short series of Civil War letters are also included in the papers. See also collection 3721, the Curtis Fletcher Marbut Papers, 1901-1943, 1981-1983.

DONOR INFORMATION

The C. F. Marbut Papers were donated to the University of Missouri by several donors in 1983 and 1984. Consult the information folder for further information.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born and raised in the rural poverty of an Ozark farming family, C.F. Marbut rose to become an eminent scientist, a cofounder of modern soil science. He received his initial education in a one-room school, but later obtained a B.S. degree from the University of Missouri in 1889 and did graduate work in geology at Harvard from 1893 to 1895. From 1895 to 1910 Marbut taught geology and physiography at the University of Missouri, meanwhile finding time also to work for the Missouri Geological Survey and to direct the Missouri Soil Survey.

In 1910 he left Missouri to serve as a soil scientist for the U.S. Bureau of Soils, remaining at the bureau for the rest of his life. Constantly on the move attending conferences, lecturing at universities, directing field trips all over the globe, and serving on countless committees and commissions, Marbut steadily grew in stature among his colleagues, winning honors and awards from scientific organizations for his brilliant work and numerous publications. Marbut's mandatory retirement from the civil service after age seventy was twice waived by President Franklin D. Roosevelt due to his exceptional service, and the scientist was still in harness when he died during a field trip to China in August 1935.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

These papers relate to the life of C.F. Marbut, his family, and the development of soil science during the early twentieth century. Materials are skimpy for the years prior to the 1910s, but become more substantial thereafter through the 1940s. The papers are arranged into nine series according to form of materials and chronologically within series. Excepted are miscellaneous manuscripts, which are arranged alphabetically by author. The nine series are: **Correspondence, Estate and Financial Records, Ephemera, Organizational Materials, Maps, Photographs, Manuscripts, Notes, and Diaries, Periodicals and Pamphlets, and Books.**

The **Correspondence** series is arranged into three sections. The first folder contains four letters written by brothers Thomas B. and Franklin C. Browning, Union soldiers, to their family

in the Missouri Ozark region. The letters give brief glimpses into the common soldier's life in the camps, battlefields, and hospitals in the mid-South during the first two years of the Civil War.

The second section of the series contains all correspondence directly related to Marbut, including his personal and professional correspondence as well as letters that passed through his hands and letters written primarily about him or his estate after his death in 1935. Professional subjects include agriculture and soil science, academia, governmental science programs, international science conferences, professional organizations, and descriptions of field trips throughout America and the world. Personal correspondence reveals in depth the education, family and social lives, military service, and careers of Marbut's five children. Because of the variety of the Marbut family's experiences this series touches upon many of the most important subjects in American social history from 1910 through the 1940s, especially that of the changing nature of the family in modern urban America.

The third section of the series consists mostly of correspondence received by C.F. Marbut's daughter Louise Marbut Moomaw. These folders include correspondence from Moomaw's children and husband, her siblings, and especially, her longtime women friends. There are a few letters included that, though not directly to or from Moomaw, apparently came into her possession. Major subjects revolve around many of the concerns of white middle-class women in America during the first half of the twentieth century: careers, education, courtship, recreation, family life, and children. The wide dispersion of her siblings and friends--from Carmel, California, to North Carolina--ensures a national rather than a regional perspective.

The **Estate and Financial Records** series contains a will, receipts, agreements, and insurance policies related to the C.F. Marbut estate. More extensive information on the subject appears in folders 67-76. Receipts, promissory notes, budgets, travel expense notes, publishing contracts, and a 1923 general statement of financial credits and debits, all bearing on C.F. Marbut's personal finances, 1900-1935, make up the rest of this series.

The **Ephemera** series includes a letter of membership to the Baptist Church, 1852; a Civil War pass, 1862; certificates; C.F. Marbut's passport; invitations and announcements for weddings, funerals, and professional or social functions; programs of academic, professional, and social events and functions; and clippings regarding the life and death of C.F. Marbut.

Minutes, programs, and proceedings of two professional organizations to which C.F. Marbut belonged, the International Society of Soil Scientists and the International Society of Sugar Cane Technologists, make up the **Organizational Materials** series. The material dates from 1925 to 1935.

The **Maps** series consists of soil and topographical maps of Brazil, Missouri, and Puerto Rico. Additional soil and topographical maps are located in the periodicals and pamphlets series and the books series.

The **Photographs** series portray the Marbut family from the 1860s through the 1960s, and document many aspects of C.F. Marbut's career as a soil scientist. Included are formal portraits, family scenes, action shots of scientific expeditions throughout the world, construction scenes, views of buildings and vehicles, and scenes from various conferences of the International Society of Soil Scientists. Additional photographs may be found enclosed in letters in the correspondence series of this collection.

The **Manuscripts, Notes, and Diaries** series contains C.F. Marbut's literary papers including notes for speeches and articles, travel notebooks, memoranda of meetings, drafts of articles, diary excerpts, and miscellaneous jottings. Most pertain to professional soil science

matters, and date from 1915 to 1935. There is also an unfinished biography of C.F. Marbut by his daughter Louise M. Moomaw. Parts are missing and there are often two or more differing drafts of a single section or chapter. The biography contains Marbut family history and information on life in the Ozarks during the nineteenth century addressed in an historical fiction format as well as straightforward biography. It provides important information on C.F. Marbut's life not found elsewhere in the collection. Written about 1940, certain segments were published in the *Life and Work of C.F. Marbut*, v. 11 in this collection.

Louise M. Moomaw's travel diary during her 1963 trip to the Far East is found in this series as well as poems and essays by Helen Marbut, c. 1930-1940s. The essays concern her life after moving to the Marbut family farm in Barry County, Missouri, in 1948, her efforts to operate the farm, and reactions of the people in the area to her, an unmarried city woman.

The miscellaneous manuscripts consist of drafts of articles on soil science and/or C.F. Marbut, a poem, a travel itinerary, and bibliographies of publications by C.F. Marbut. They are arranged alphabetically by author with anonymous at the end.

The **Periodicals and Pamphlets** are related to soil science and/or the life of C.F. Marbut. The periodicals are all professional scientific journals, and the pamphlets are mostly outprints of the same. Many of the articles were written by Marbut or were part of his library. The **Books** include those authored by Marbut, about him, or about soil science.

Marbut the man is best revealed by his correspondence--much of his professional correspondence probably remains in government files--while Marbut the scientist emerges most clearly from manuscripts, publications, and organizational materials. Photographs show both aspects.

Clear pictures of his five children also emerge from the materials; they appear in Marbut's correspondence, in that of his daughter, in some manuscripts, and in photographs. Because of the quantity of the material about them and because of the diversity of their lives--doctor, contractor, teacher, journalist, and housewife, all residing in different regions of the nation--the collection provides valuable insights into life in America during the 1910s through the 1940s.

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f. 110	Marbut estate, 1935-1947
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SEE ALSO additional soil and topographical maps located in periodicals and pamphlets series, f. 165-184, and books series, v. 1-12.

Photographs Series

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- f. 141-144 Marbut literary papers, 1915-1935.
- f. 145-159 Unfinished biography of C.F. Marbut by Louise M. Moomaw, 1940.
- f. 160 Louise M. Moomaw's Far East travel diary, 1963.
- f. 161 Poems and essays by Helen Marbut, c. 1930-1940s.
- f. 161-164 Miscellaneous manuscripts.

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v. 1 Marbut, C.F., *Reports on Areal Geology*, 1898.
 v. 2 Marbut, C.F., *The Evolution of the Northern Part of the Lowlands of Southeastern Missouri*, 1902.
 v. 3 Marbut, C.F., *The Geology of Morgan County* [Missouri], 1907.
 v. 4 Marbut, C.F., et al., *Soils of the United States*, 1913.
 v. 5 Glinka, K.D., *The Types of Soil*, unpublished typescript, translation by C.F. Marbut, 1920.
 v. 6 Marbut, C.F., *The Transcontinental Excursion Under the Auspices of the American Soil Survey Association*, unpublished mimeograph, 1927.
 v. 7 Glinka, K.D., *The Great Soil Groups of the World and Their Development*, translated by C.F. Marbut, 1927.
 v. 8-9 Marbut, C.F., *Soil Genesis and Classification*, unpublished carbon typescript of lecture series, 1928.
 v. 10 Marbut, C.F., *Atlas of American Agriculture, Part III, Soils of the United States*, 1935.
 v. 11 Krusekropf, H.H., ed., *Life and Work of C.F. Marbut*, 1942.
 v. 12 Marbut, C.F., *Soils: Their Genesis and Classification*, 1951

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